



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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GOVERNOR ANNOUNCES STAFF CHANGES

PHOENIX – Governor Janet Napolitano has announced changes to her senior staff and has announced a new state agency leader.

Dennis Burke, Napolitano's Chief of Staff, will leave his job in mid-September to work on a variety of political campaigns in Arizona. Burke has worked with the Governor since her days as United States Attorney, and has been Chief of Staff since she took office as Governor in 2003.

Over the course of his career, Burke has worked for the U.S. Department of Justice and in the White House as a Senior Policy Analyst, coordinating crime and drug policies and acting as a liaison to federal law enforcement. Burke worked as an Assistant U.S. Attorney for the District of Arizona, prosecuting narcotics cases, and as the Chief Deputy Attorney General for the State of Arizona.

Replacing Burke is **Jan Leshner**, currently the Director of the Arizona Department of Commerce. Prior to her work at Commerce, Leshner was the Director of the Governor's Southern Arizona Office, working to forge solid relationships between state government and rural Arizona.

A Tucson native, Leshner has also served as Vice-President of Communications and Marketing for the Tucson Economic Development Corporation; Executive Director of the Tucson Community Cable Corporation; and Vice President of Warner-Amex Cable. She has an extensive and impressive history of community involvement, including service with the Arizona Town Hall; the Greater Tucson Economic Council; the Tucson Airport Authority; La Frontera; and she was named Metropolitan Tucson Chamber of Commerce Woman of the Year in 2005.

The Governor has also announced that **George Cunningham**, Deputy Chief of Staff for Finance and Budget, will retire. Cunningham has enjoyed a long and distinguished career in state government. He served eight years in the Arizona Legislature, from 1993 to 2000; during his time in the Senate, he was the ranking member of the Senate Finance Committee and served as Minority Whip in his second term.

Prior to his legislative service, Cunningham worked as Vice President for Administrative Services at the University of Arizona, as well as in other administrative and financial capacities at the University. He served as Chief of Staff for Governor Rose Mofford; Chief Policy Advisor to the Arizona State Senate President; Executive Director of the Pima Association of Governments; and Assistant City Manager of South Tucson, Arizona.

James Apperson will take over as Deputy Chief of Staff for Finance and Budget. Since October 2006, Apperson has served in the Governor's Office as Director of the Office of Strategic Planning and Budgeting. Prior to joining the Governor, Apperson was President and CEO of the Arizona Chamber of Commerce, overseeing all aspects of the operation including policy analysis and legislative advocacy.

Apperson has also worked for the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission; Maricopa Community Colleges; Southwest Gas; the Arizona House of Representatives, as a research analyst; and the Arizona Corporation Commission. Apperson has served twice before in the Governor's Office, during the Mofford and Babbitt administrations.

The Governor's Legislative Liaison and Deputy Chief of Staff, **Mike Haener**, will also move on. Haener has also served with the Governor since the beginning of her term, as Deputy Chief of Staff for Legislative Affairs. His work has been critically important to advancing the Governor's agenda, including the creation of voluntary, statewide full-day kindergarten, establishing a medical center in downtown Phoenix, and creation of Science Foundation Arizona.

Before joining the Governor's Office, Haener was the Director of Legislative Affairs and Communications, working with Napolitano at the Office of the Attorney General; had his own consulting business, working on campaign strategy, public policy and by guiding candidates during the formative days of Arizona's vote-by-mail program; and was an Assistant to the Mayor of the City of Phoenix.

The Governor has appointed **Suzie Barr** to take over duties as Director of Legislative Affairs. Barr currently serves as the Governor's Deputy Director of Legislative Affairs and Policy Advisor for Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice. Prior to working for the Governor, Barr was a prosecutor for the Maricopa County Attorney's Office, and worked in Washington, D.C. for Senators John McCain and Jon Kyl. She is a graduate of the University of Arizona and has a Juris Doctorate from the Arizona State University College of Law.

Finally, **Marco Lopez, Jr.**, will take over as Director of the Arizona Department of Commerce, continuing an early and successful career of service to the state. In 2000, Lopez was elected Mayor of the city of Nogales, Arizona – at the age of 22 years old, he was one of the youngest mayors in the United States. He was re-elected to that job by an overwhelming margin in 2002.

Lopez then joined state government as Executive Director of the Arizona-Mexico Commission, an organization essential to developing international policy, and in enhancing the economic power of the Arizona-Sonora region. In recent years, the AMC has been responsible for improvements to Arizona's Ports of Entry, as well as a dramatic increase in cooperation between law enforcement agencies on both sides of the international border.

Most recently, Lopez has continued and expanded that work as the Governor's Senior Policy Advisor for International Affairs.

"Dennis, Mike and George have been with me for a very long time, and together, we've accomplished much for Arizona. I will miss them," said Governor Napolitano. "At the same time, I'm thrilled to have talented members of my team take on new jobs. I have absolute confidence that each of them will excel in their new areas."

Although transitions have begun, most of the personnel changes are effective September 15th.

For more information about the Office of the Governor, visit www.azgovernor.gov.

